



## City of Seattle

Gregory J. Nickels, Mayor

### Department of Planning and Development

Diane M. Sugimura, Director

## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Councilmember Peter Steinbrueck, Chair, UD&P Committee  
Councilmember Richard Conlin  
Councilmember Tom Rasmussen

**FROM:** Diane M. Sugimura

**DATE:** January 5, 2004

**SUBJECT:** Committee Briefing: DPD 2004 End of Year Update, January 12, 2005

We welcome this opportunity to share with you some of the Department of Planning and Development's (DPD) activities for the last quarter of 2004, as well as some year end statistics.

### **Update on Development Fee Revenues**

We had anticipated improvement, but the amount was surprising. Our 2004 budgeted forecast for development fee revenue was \$12.5 million. Our revised forecast generated in January of 2004 forecasted \$15 million. Our actual revenue was \$17.7 million at year's end. Because of these revenues and accompanying workload requirements, we used our contingent budget authority toward the end of 2004 to cover staff overtime and peak-load consultant assistance, and to allow us to start with the hiring of staff that have been approved for 2005.

### **Snapshot of Large Project Development Proposals**

In 2004 compared with 2003, we saw about a 20% increase in the number of projects valued at over a million dollars, and more than a 40% increase in the total dollar value for such projects. Not only are the numbers increasing, but also the scale of development.

### **Residential Development for 2004**

Since 2000, we had been seeing a steady decline in the net number of dwelling units permitted, from 5,896 in 2000 to 2,687 in 2003. However, in 2004 the number rose to 4,106 net new units. Hopefully this is the start of a new trend.

### **Permit Process Improvements ... A Roll-Out**

On November 16th, DPD launched the new process to enhance Interdepartmental Coordination in the permitting process. The purpose is to bring departments together early in the permit application process to identify issues and make decisions, reducing the potential for downstream permitting problems. This process relies on new procedures and technology to allow online discussions and information sharing. Eight departments are participating in this effort. We are using a new web-based technology that links the departments who are involved in development permitting, so they have a common "tool" to communicate permitting issues and design concerns.

### **Construction Permit Review Performance for 2004**

Of the 5,282 simple permits (non-routed to different review locations), 69% received initial review within our 48-hour target, 75% within 72 hours, and 79% within 96 hours. In 2005, our goal is to reach 80% within 48 hours. For the 1,358 complex (routed) permits, 45% received initial review within our 6-week target, 57% within 7 weeks, and 68% within 8 weeks. In 2005, our goal is to reach 80% within 6 weeks.

### **Helping the Local Economy**

"The building burned, the business didn't." This is the statement on Environmental Home Center's recent bumper sticker. Following what could have been a disastrous fire in August, we were able to issue a change of use and tenant improvement permit for a new business location, in 14 days. All employees kept their jobs. They were able to re-open about a month after receiving their permit.

### **Code Compliance**

Judgments: Over the past several years we have been working closely with Law to seek judgments on some of our most difficult code violation cases. In September, we received a \$475,000 judgment against a property owner who had been cited for violations to the Housing and Building Maintenance Code. In October, we had another six-figure day for three difficult to resolve cases.

An Interdepartmental Approach to Enforcement: We have been working closely with several other departments in an effort led by the Department of Neighborhoods and SPD's West Precinct to address a variety of issues related to nightclub operations. This has been a cooperative effort with the City, other agencies, and bar and nightclub owners. In mid-November, representatives of nightclubs from the Pioneer Square and Belltown areas met with various law enforcement and regulatory agencies to discuss how best to manage their businesses.

### **Urban Sustainability Activities**

We are preparing for CM Steinbrueck's brown (green?) bag presentation on Tuesday, January 25 in the Bertha Landes room. Five local developers (Liz Dunn, Dunn & Hobbes; Mark Huppert, Catapult Community Developers; Jim Mueller, Vulcan; Greg Smith, Gregory Broderick Smith Real Estate; and John Teutsch, Teutsch Partners) will be talking about the Urban Sustainability Study Tour of Denmark and Sweden and lessons learned for Seattle. We are also planning a series Urban Sustainability Forums with

local, national and international speakers. One date to mark on your calendars is for Svend Auken, VP of the Danish Parliament and former Danish Minister of Energy and the Environment, who will be in Seattle in March. A major public presentation is scheduled for the evening of March 18 at Meany Hall. You will be hearing more about this. The Oregon Environmental Council is planning similar events in Portland.

### **Long-range Planning Activities**

Public Involvement Guide: Former Planning Commission Director Marty Curry has prepared a guide for DPD to use for public involvement processes. The guide is intended to provide staff the tools to develop a public process program that will best match the nature of each project. We will share this resource with all departments when complete.

Comprehensive Plan 10-Year Update: We are working on a revised graphic layout to make the plan more legible, and an executive summary/user's guide to help make the document a "best seller." These will be released next month.

Waterfront Plan: Staff is preparing a draft concept plan for review by the waterfront advisory group this month. This group met five times in 2004, and will meet two more times in 2005. We have scheduled a public meeting on Wednesday, February 9 (5:00-8:00 pm in Bertha Landes room, City Hall) to present the draft and to illustrate how the ideas generated from the charrette and other public meetings have been incorporated into the Concept Plan. This year we will focus on finaling the Concept Plan, working on design concepts for the surface and public spaces, and seeking additional resources so we can complete a design plan.

Neighborhood Business District Strategy: We released the staff proposal at public meetings in October and have met with community groups in the six neighborhoods where we propose to create or revise the pedestrian overlay. We have had mixed reaction to the proposal. Proposed parking revisions have been of particular concern, yet some clearly understand how important this concept is to furthering our Comprehensive Plan goals. We are working on draft code language, conducting SEPA review, and completing the Director's Report. We anticipate submittal to Council in February.

Neighborhood Revitalization Areas: Responding to City Council resolutions and requests from neighborhoods, we have now completed and submitted to Council, proposed code amendments for four areas – South Lake Union, First Hill, University District and Broadway. We hope these will soon move forward.

Northgate Revitalization: The Northgate Stakeholders Group continues to make significant progress. We staffed three working sessions for the group this fall, as well as the second public forum, held on November 9. Also in November, the group developed their advice paper in support of the major mall expansion proposed by Simon. Simon has been responsive to earlier comments made by the group concerning how the development meets the street, pedestrian connections, and the potential use of natural drainage features for the west parking lot.

Environmentally Critical Areas: We have almost completed the proposal. We expect another public meeting in February, with submission to Council in the spring.

Sharing Learning Experiences with Our Neighbors to the North: We have had several visits recently from our colleagues from Vancouver, interested in exchanging information about our respective planning work. The first group was from Vancouver's Central Area planning group. They were very interested in the Center City Strategy and in new large scale housing development outside of downtown, so they toured New Holly.

A second group of Vancouver planners were here a couple weeks ago, sponsored by the University of Washington and University of British Columbia, to compare the two cities' Chinatowns, and the development/planning efforts in both. A large workshop was scheduled with members of Seattle's Chinatown/ID community, and the planners and students from both universities. The goal of the workshop was to share experiences dealing with similar problems in development and preservation, and to determine what ideas might be transferable. The issues in both communities seem to be similar, including rehabilitation and re-use of vacant and under-used historic buildings.

A third group of Vancouver planners came to look at neighborhood planning, and plan implementation. DON organized this visit to focus on specific elements of neighborhood planning and how the city works with neighborhood groups to implement plans. Tours of neighborhoods in downtown, West Seattle, and SE Seattle were conducted.

### **Upcoming Public Events, January and Early February 2005**

#### Downtown Zoning Open House

Thursday, January 13, 6:30 to 8:30 pm (discussion starts at 7:00 pm)  
Bertha Landes Room, Seattle City Hall  
600 Fourth Avenue (entrance on Fifth Avenue)

#### Landslide Information Meetings

Saturday, January 22, 10:00 am to noon  
North Seattle Community College (cafeteria on west side of campus)  
9600 College Way North

Saturday, January 29, 10:00 am to noon  
Mount Baker Community Club  
2822 Mr. Rainier Dr. S.

#### Councilmember Steinbrueck's Brown Bag: Visions of Urban Sustainability ... Inspiration from Abroad, Action in Seattle!

Tuesday, January 25, noon to 1:30 pm  
Bertha Landes Room, Seattle City Hall  
600 Fourth Avenue (entrance on Fifth Avenue)

#### Phinney Neighborhood Association's Annual Home Design and Remodel Fair

Sunday, January 30, 11:00 am to 4:00 pm  
6532 Phinney Ave. N.

Central Waterfront Planning Update  
Wednesday, February 9, 5:00 to 8:00 pm  
Bertha Landes Room, Seattle City Hall  
600 Fourth Avenue (entrance on Fifth Avenue)